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ABSTRACT

This publication is intended for teachers bringing a class to visit the National Archives in Washington, D.C., for a workshop on primary documents. The National Archives serves as the repository for all federal records of enduring value. Primary sources are vital teaching tools because they actively engage the student's imagination so that he or she may visualize past events and make sense of their reality and meaning. This publication concerns a workshop on immigrants to the United States. Two documents featured in the workshop are discussed--"The Growth of the Population: 1790-1890" from the U.S. Census Bureau's 1989 Statistical Atlas of the United States and "Remember Your First Thrill of American Liberty," a 1917 poster used to persuade recent immigrants to buy U.S. government bonds. Photographs of these documents as well as two student exercises are included. (DB)

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ED 364 454

"E Pluribus Unum"

America as a Nation

of Immigrants

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"E Pluribus Unum"
America as a Nation of Immigrants

FOR THE TEACHER

Thank you for arranging a National Archives workshop for your class. For too many students, history is just an endless string of dates and events chronicled in a textbook. Primary sources actively engage the student's imagination so that he or she may visualize past events and sense their reality and meaning. Before your workshop, it would be advantageous to introduce your students to primary sources with the poster-size documents and the attendant exercises we have provided. The exercises may be photocopied and should be adapted to fit your objectives and teaching style. We hope that these preliminary materials and our workshop will enhance your class's understanding and appreciation of the immigrant experience and its pervasive and beneficial influence upon the development of the United States.

Immigration

Immigrants and their descendants constitute the very fabric of American society. All fields of American endeavor — religion, politics, business, science, arts, athletics, and entertainment — have felt the impact of immigrants. As early as 1776, the importance of immigration for the fledgling nation was clearly evident. One of the most famous documents in the National Archives, the Declaration of Independence, heartily objects to the British Crown's attempts to restrict immigration: "He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands." This indictment of King George III may come as no surprise in light of the fact that of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, 18 were of non-English stock, and 8 were first-generation immigrants. Fourteen years later, after the creation of the federal government, statistical information attesting to the immigrant character of the new republic became available. The 1790 census indicates that almost 1 million African Americans and 4 million Europeans settled in the United States. Most of these first Europeans were either of English, Welsh, Scotch-Irish, or German stock.

The sheer number of immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries is astonishing. From 1820 to 1975 nearly 46.5 million people entered the United States: 8.3 million from the Western Hemisphere alone, 2.2 million from Asia, and 35.9 million from Europe. This deluge was relatively uninterrupted from 1820 to 1924. The Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II significantly curtailed immigration: Of the 35.9 million people who came between 1820 and 1975, 32 million came before 1924.

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"The Growth of the Elements of the Population: 1790–1890"

Map 64 and diagram 65, on the front of your poster, have been selected from the U.S. Census Bureau's 1898 *Statistical Atlas of the United States*. Map 64 shows by state the ratio of aliens to the total foreign-born males of 21 years of age and older. Diagram 65 tells the 100-year-old story of a nation growing in both population and ethnic diversity. The breadth of the diagram represents the number of inhabitants as determined by the decennial censuses of 1790–1890. The first section, termed "Colored," represents the African-American element; the second, termed "Native Stock," the native whites and their descendants; and the third, termed "Foreign Stock," those of foreign birth and their descendants. The additions labeled "Immigration" represent total immigration in each decade. Before 1830 the Census Bureau assumed that all whites were "Native Stock" (born in the United States before or after 1776) because recent immigrants composed a relatively small percentage of the population. The bureau only began collecting data on immigrants and their descendants ("Foreign Stock") after they appeared in appreciable numbers between 1830 and 1840. Nonetheless, the graph may invite the questions from your students: Who immigrated to North America before 1830? Why did they come?

The critical need for cheap labor initially spurred immigration to colonial America. Over half of all white laborers entering the colonies before 1776 were indentured servants, impoverished Englishmen working in the colonies for a set period of time, hoping to gain freedom by paying off their debts. Since 1619, these English laborers had been joined by African laborers. Although initially the majority of these Africans were not legally slaves, a system of slavery was eventually hoisted upon a great many of these involuntary immigrants in the 1660s. Shortly after the arrival of the English and Africans, the promise of religious toleration brought many Scotch-Irish, Scots, and Germans to the colonies.

As diagram 65 indicates, however, the levels of colonial immigration were dwarfed by those after 1830. From 1830 to 1865 about 5 million people came to the United States; roughly half were British, while about 40 percent were Irish. After the Civil War and until 1890, another 10 million people arrived, mostly from Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. Between 1890 and 1914, 15 million immigrants moved to the United States. Beckoned by an acute demand for unskilled workers to fill burgeoning numbers of factory jobs, this later group consisted mainly of new ethnic groups from southern and eastern Europe — Poles, Russian Jews, Ukrainians, Slovaks, Croatians, Slovenes, Romanians, and Italians. The grouping "Other," sitting atop "Italians, Hungarians, and Poles" in diagram 65, clearly indicates the novelty of the influx of southern and eastern Europeans.

"Remember Your First Thrill of American Liberty"

The outbreak of World War I temporarily arrested the flow of immigration. The United States, however, did not join the conflict until 1917. This belated involvement was due in large part to America's historical isolation from European entanglements, the geographical remoteness of the brutal fighting, and, above all, the profound ethnic divisions that existed in early 20th-century America. The 1910 census indicated that approximately 32 million Americans out of a total population of 92 million were either foreign-born or the offspring of foreign-born parents. About one-third of this group came from Germany and Austria-Hungary. Neither their support for American involvement nor the enthusiasm of millions of other Americans could be considered completely unshakable.

Acknowledging American reluctance, the U.S. government carried out an extensive propaganda campaign intended to mobilize public opinion and public investment for the war effort. Coordinating strategy and spearheading this campaign was the Committee on Public Information (CPI), created in 1917 and led by the progressive journalist George Creel. Nine days after Creel assumed leadership, he met with the illustrator and creator of the "Gibson Girls," Charles Dana Gibson. During this meeting, the CPI's Division of Pictorial Publicity was born. This division produced the most memorable form of propaganda during the war, vivid posters in support of the cause. The CPI used many posters to persuade citizens to invest in America by purchasing Liberty bonds. There were four Liberty Loan drives. Each drive achieved greater participation than the one before, but the advertising themes employed in the posters remained the same: love of country, devotion to liberty, and desire to eliminate an enemy who endangered home and nation. On the back of your poster is an example of this artistry. Most important in this case was the poster's intended audience. It was considered the citizen's duty to buy Liberty bonds as a perfect opportunity to demonstrate loyalty, a loyalty that for recent immigrants was often called into question during the elevated tensions of the war. Using your poster as a guide, ask your students to design posters that they think would have inspired immigrant participation in the war effort. Discuss the use of emotional visual symbols in contrast to reasoning and persuasion through written words.

Also explain to your students that one repercussion of government propaganda was its ability to create an overzealous atmosphere that aroused vigilantism against the foreign-born, especially German Americans. This atmosphere lingered on after World War I and intensified the fears of those who believed that though immigration slowed during the war, millions of refugees seeking land and jobs would inundate the United States and destroy the prosperity of the "Roaring Twenties." Many Americans believed that immigrants brought European radicalism with them and especially blamed immigrants for agitating labor unrest. Fear of foreign radicalism eventually reached a feverish pitch and culminated in a communist Red Scare that swept the nation. Congress responded to these pressures and in 1924 passed the National Origins Act, which set immigration quotas that conspicuously discriminated against southern and eastern Europeans.

The National Origins Act, in combination with the Great Depression and World War II, kept immigration rates low throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. Between the end of World War II and the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, most immigrants to the United States were either Europeans displaced by the war or Mexican agricultural workers. The Immigration Act of 1965 significantly transformed the nature of American immigration. The discriminatory quotas based on national origins that had favored northwestern Europeans were replaced by a system based on family preference. The act exempted from the new quotas close relatives of persons already in the United States. Hence, once immigrants became citizens, they could bring their families to the United States. Although immigration from Europe was anticipated, improvement in the European economies, deteriorating conditions in Latin America, the war in Vietnam, and the system of family preference combined to cause a dramatic shift. Since that time, most immigrants have come from Mexico and Indochina.

What is the National Archives?

Established in 1934, the National Archives helps preserve our nation's history by serving as the repository for all federal records of enduring value. It thus serves the federal government, researchers of many topics, and the American public. Because federal records reflect and document more than 200 years of American development, the records in the National Archives holdings are great in number, diverse in character, and rich in information.

Before your students participate in a tour or a workshop, they should be familiar with the mission of the National Archives. We recommend that you present your students with the following vocabulary words and questions:

- *Please define Archives, Archivist, Document, Record, Preservation.*
- *Why do you and your family save documents? Why are they important?*
- *The U.S. government keeps its records in the National Archives.*
  Why does the government save its records?
- *What kinds of records might the U.S. government want to save?*
- *What famous documents are at the National Archives?*

You will be called by the National Archives docent assigned to your class about a week before the date of your tour or workshop. If the workshop will be held in your classroom, then please be prepared to relay information concerning directions, parking, and school check-in procedures.

Whether it is our Behind-the-Scenes Tour or one of our Primary Document Workshops, we are confident that the experience will provide an exciting new look at history. In order to assess our performance, we would appreciate your cooperation in completing the enclosed evaluation form and returning it in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

If you have any additional questions regarding your tour or workshop, please contact the Volunteer and Tour Office Staff at 202-501-5205.

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Exercise I:

"Growth of the Elements of the Population: 1790–1890"

1. Define the following:

• Alien	• Census	• Estimate	• Exclusion Act of 1882
• Naturalization	• Population	• Projection	• Proportion

2. Use map 64 to answer the following question.

   Rank the following states from 1 (largest) to 5 (smallest) according to their ratios of aliens to foreign-born males.

   ___ Montana ___ Iowa ___ California ___ Arizona ___ Louisiana

3. California was a major center of Chinese immigration in 19th century. As you already know, California had a relatively high ratio of aliens to foreign-born males. According to the census of 1890, 90 percent of these aliens were Chinese. Why is this percentage so high? (Hint: look over your vocabulary words.)

4. Use diagram 65 to answer the following questions.

   The breadth of the diagram represents the number of inhabitants as determined by the decennial censuses of 1790–1890. The first section, termed "Colored," represents the African-American element; the second, termed "Native Stock," the native whites and their descendants; and the third, termed "Foreign Stock," those of foreign birth and their descendants. The additions labeled "Immigration" represent total immigration in each decade. Before 1830 the Census Bureau assumed that all whites were "Native Stock" (born in the United States before or after 1776) because recent immigrants composed a relatively small percentage of the population.

   a. Which decade had the most immigration?
   b. What were the three largest immigrant groups by 1890?
   c. What were the three smallest immigrant groups?
   d. Did immigration and the number of foreign stock increase during the course of the century? Do you notice other trends?
   e. Based on these trends, what are your projections for post-1890 immigration? Will it increase? Check your predictions against what really happened.

Exercise II:

"Remember Your First Thrill of American Liberty"

Examine the poster. Keep in mind that television had not yet been invented, and although radio existed, radio ownership and radio broadcasts were not yet widespread.

1. Where is the location depicted in the poster? _____

2. In about what year(s) would this scene have taken place? _____

3. At first glance, what is the poster advertising? Why? _____

_____

_____

4. To what group(s) is it designed to appeal? _____

_____

5. What aspects of the poster would appeal to the group(s)? _____

_____

_____

6. What else can you infer about immigrants and immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries from the poster? _____

_____

_____

7. If you were a new citizen or recent immigrant in 1917, how would you have been influenced by advertisements such as the poster? _____

_____

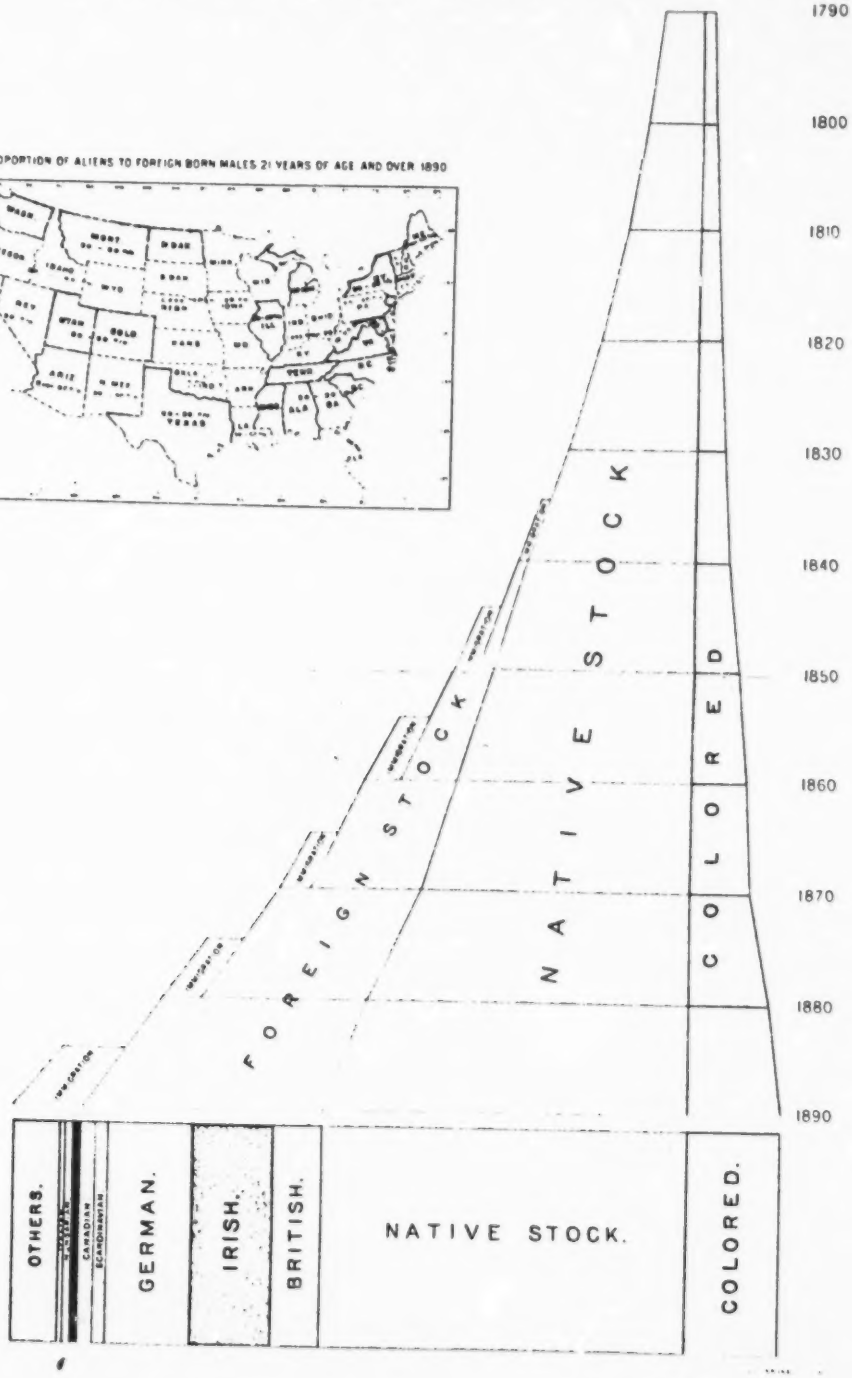
_____

8. If you had the task of creating a poster that would influence immigrants to buy Liberty bonds, how would you design it? _____

_____

_____

65. GROWTH OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION: 1790 TO 1890. PLATE 22



"Growth of the Elements of the Population: 1790–1890," U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Atlas of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1898
The National Archives

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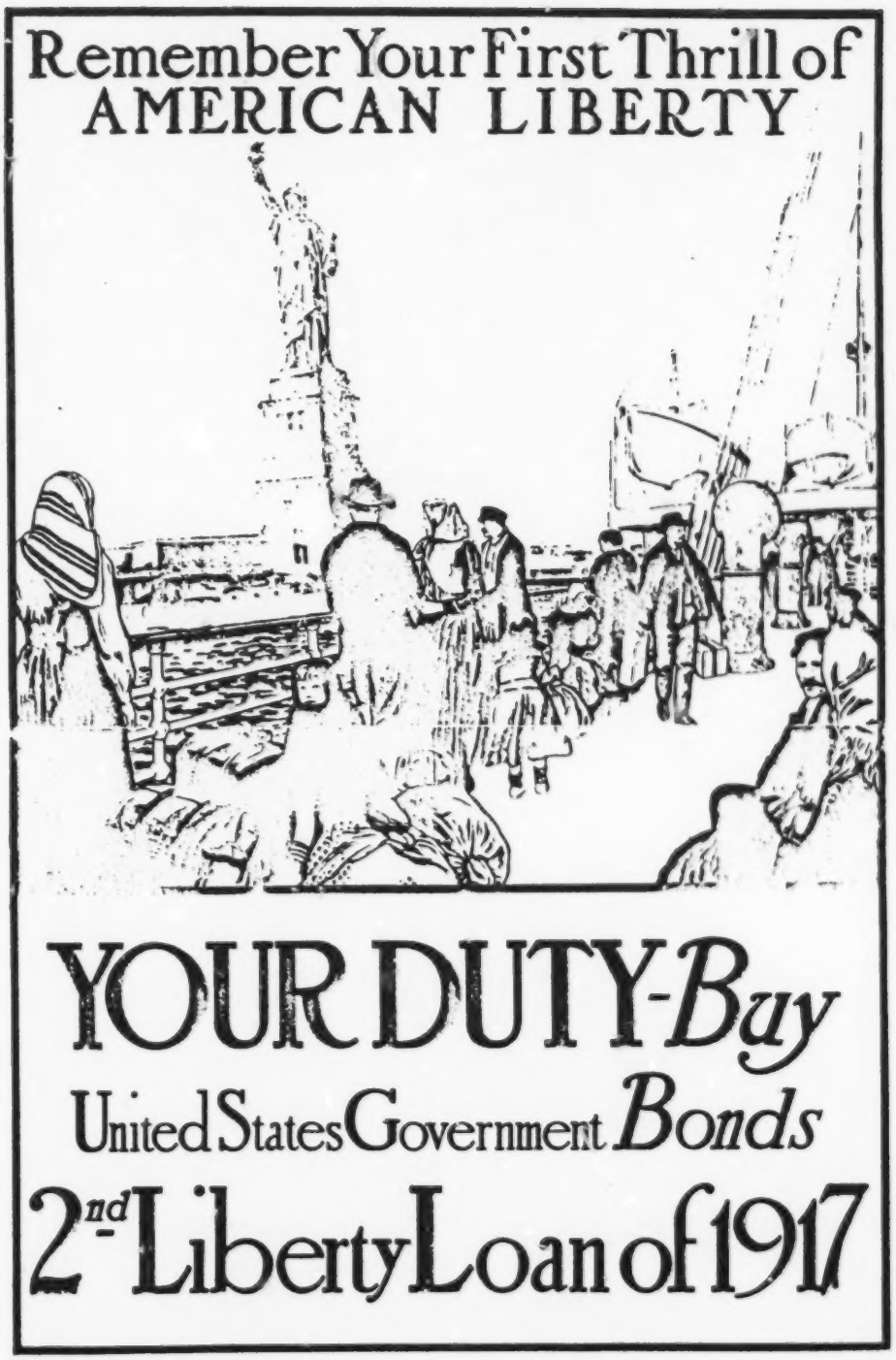

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